

Election Procedures Review  
Of  
**Pend Oreille County**  
State of Washington  
2007 General Election



Conducted by the  
Office of the Secretary of State  
Election Certification and Training Program



# Introduction

The Washington State Legislature enacted legislation in 1992 mandating that the Office of the Secretary of State review county election procedures and practices. The Election Certification and Training Program was established within the Elections Division of the Office of the Secretary of State to conduct reviews and to provide for the certification of election administrators. In 2005, the Legislature expanded the Election Certification and Training Program to require that each County Auditor's Office be reviewed at least once every three years. The Legislature also added a requirement that the program conduct a follow-up visit to verify that the County Auditor's Office has taken steps to correct the problems noted in the report.

The election review process is governed by RCW 29A.04.510 through 29A.04.590 and Chapter 434-260 of the Washington Administrative Code.

Pursuant to RCW 29A.04.570(1)(b), the Election Certification and Training Program conducted an election review in Pend Oreille County during the 2007 General Election cycle. Samantha Duncan, Elections Program Specialist, represented the Election Certification and Training Program during the review. Marianne Nichols, Pend Oreille County Auditor, Liz Krizenesky, Brad Stratton, and other members of the staff participated on behalf of the Pend Oreille County Auditor's Office.

Both the reviewer and the Pend Oreille County Elections Department approached the review in a spirit of cooperation. The department allowed the reviewer to thoroughly review and examine all aspects of the election processes. The staff provided documentation and materials during the review which greatly contributed to a successful examination process.

The purpose of this review report is to provide the Pend Oreille County Elections Department with a useful evaluation of its election procedures and policies and to encourage procedural consistency in the administration of elections throughout the state. This review report includes a series of recommendations and suggestions that are intended to assist the Pend Oreille County Elections Department in improving and enhancing its election processes to better serve the voters.

The reviewer is statutorily prohibited from making any evaluation, finding, or recommendation regarding the validity of any primary or election, or of any canvass of the election returns. Consequently, this review report should not be interpreted as affecting the validity of the outcome of any election or of any canvass of election returns.

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# Overview

Picturesque Pend Oreille County, located in the far northeastern corner of the State of Washington, is home to over 7,200 registered voters. The county has been voting all by mail since 2002.

In addition to the Honorable Marianne Nichols, Pend Oreille County Auditor, the elections department consists of Liz Krizenesky, Elections Supervisor, and Brad Stratton, a contract employee hired to work in elections, particularly with the street files and GIS system. During the elections cycle, one temporary employee and employees from other divisions in the Auditor's Office are called on to assist with the ballot processing.

Administering elections has grown more technical and complicated in the past few years, and there have been numerous additional requirements that take up large amounts of staff time. While the Pend Oreille County Elections Department is working well, they would greatly benefit from being able to hire more employees dedicated to elections.

Even more importantly, the Pend Oreille Elections Department is in desperate need of a permanent space for ballot processing. There has been a temporary solution to the problem, agreed upon by the Auditor and the County Commissioners and they should be commended for working together to address this issue. However, finding permanent space with adequate room for the elections department to do their jobs in a secure, controlled, and transparent environment is paramount.

The optimistic attitude of the Auditor and her staff made this review a positive experience, and it was a pleasant office to visit. In spite of the very cramped quarters and small staff, the Pend Oreille County Elections Department is doing a good job with what they have. Attending to the items in this report will further improve the accuracy and efficiency in the department.

# Recommendations

The following recommendations indicate where the county is out of compliance with the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), the Washington Administrative Code (WAC), the Washington State Constitution, or Federal election law. The reviewer obtained information based on actual observation of a procedure, verbal explanation, or written procedures. The reviewer provides a description of the county's procedure, a citation of the applicable law, and a recommendation based on the citation.

## **Ballot Boxes**

There is one ballot deposit box in the Pend Oreille County Auditor's Office, one unstaffed box outside the building, and one unstaffed box in the city of Ione. The outside boxes do appear to meet USPS security standards. Although both boxes were locked, numbered seals were not used to secure the boxes and logs were not used to document access. After discussing this with the staff, numbered seals were immediately attached to the box in the office and integrated into the procedures. There were no suitable seals immediately available for use on the outside boxes.

*WAC 434-250-100(3) "Ballot boxes must be locked and sealed at all times, with seal logs that document each time the box is opened, by whom, and the number of ballots removed."*

**Recommendation:** Numbered seals must be used on both ballot deposit boxes, and a log must be kept to document access.

## **Unsigned Ballot Oaths and Mismatched Signatures**

Occasionally, a ballot is received with an unsigned oath on the envelope or with a signature that does not match the voter's signature on file. When this occurs, the elections staff contacts the voter by first class mail. If the oath was unsigned, the voter is instructed to sign the enclosed copy of the ballot envelope and return it to the Auditor's Office by the day before certification. If the signature did not match, the voter is informed that in order for the ballot to be counted, he or she must either come into the Auditor's Office and fill out a new registration form, or sign the oath included with the letter and return it to the County Auditor's Office by the day before certification.

It was observed that although the letters state the deadline as the day before certification day, in practice, elections staff do accept these letters from voters on certification day itself.

*WAC 434-261-050(3) states, "If the signature on the oath of an absentee or provisional ballot envelope does not match the signature on the voter registration record, the voter must either:*

*(a) Appear in person and sign a new registration form no later than the day before certification of the primary or election. The updated signature provided on the new registration form becomes the signature on the voter registration record for the current election and future elections; or*

*(b) Sign a copy of the affidavit provided by the auditor, and provide a photocopy of a valid government or tribal identification that includes the voter's current signature. The signature on the affidavit must match the signature on the identification, and both of those signatures must match the signature on the ballot envelope. The voter must return the signed*

*affidavit and identification to the auditor no later than the day before certification of the primary or election. The county auditor may also send the voter a new registration form to update the signature on the voter registration record for future elections; or*

*(c) Sign a copy of the affidavit provided by the auditor in front of two witnesses who attest to the signature. The signature on the affidavit must match the signature on the ballot envelope. The voter must return the signed affidavit to the auditor no later than the day before certification of the primary or election. The county auditor may also send the voter a new registration form to update the signature on the voter registration record for future elections.”*

**Recommendation:** The elections staff must adhere to the deadline stated in law and accept signatures only through the day before certification.

The letter for mismatched signatures needed to be reworded to include the additional requirements listed in the WAC. After discussing this with elections staff, the letter has already been revised and is in compliance.

### **Ballot Duplication**

When ballots are separated out by the tabulation machine because of an overvoted race, they are set aside for duplication. Pend Oreille County elections staff duplicates the overvoted races to be read as undervotes. Because of this, the results do not accurately report the number of overvotes and undervotes and therefore it is more difficult to recognize any anomalies in the results. Additionally, ballots were duplicated that did not need to be duplicated in order to be properly read by the tabulation system.

WAC 434-260-020 states, “Following the election and prior to the official canvass, the county auditor shall prepare a preliminary abstract of votes, listing the number of registered voters and votes cast. Provisional ballot results must be combined with precinct results.

*(1) The preliminary abstract of votes must list separately for each precinct:*

*(a) Votes cast by absentee or mail ballot and votes cast at the polls;*

*(b) Votes cast for and against measures;*

*(c) Votes cast for candidates; and*

*(d) Overvotes and undervotes.*

*(2) Pursuant to RCW 29A.60.230, the county auditor may aggregate results or take other necessary steps to maintain the secrecy of ballots.*

*(3) The county auditor shall inspect the preliminary abstract of votes for errors or anomalies that may affect the results of the election. Correction of any errors or anomalies discovered must be made prior to the official canvass.”*

WAC 434-261-110 requires, “Precinct results, showing overvotes and undervotes, shall be inspected by the county canvassing board, or their designees, for anomalies that may indicate

*problems with the hardware or programming used to tabulate the votes. Anomalies may include, but are not limited to, an abnormal number of overvotes, undervotes, vote distribution, and voter turnout in any precinct, race, or jurisdiction. This inspection shall be completed within two days of the election.”*

*WAC 434-261-005(2) “ ‘Duplicating ballots’ is the process of making a true copy of valid votes from ballots that may not be properly counted by the vote tallying system.”*

**Recommendation:** The Pend Oreille County elections staff must tabulate overvotes as overvotes and not duplicate them to be read differently by the tabulation equipment. This will allow their results to accurately report the overvotes and undervotes as is required. They will then be able to thoroughly inspect the results for anomalies.

### **Provisional Ballots**

The Pend Oreille County Elections Department prints provisional ballots that contain all races and issues, essentially similar to the sample ballot. The provisional ballots are printed on green paper, making them visually distinguishable from other ballots. There were no provisional envelopes available, no free access system to determine the ballot’s disposition, and no procedures for issuing a provisional ballot.

*RCW 29A.44.207 indicates, “Provisional ballots must be issued, along with a provisional ballot outer envelope and a security envelope, to voters as appropriate under RCW 29A.04.008. The provisional ballot outer envelope must include a place for the voter's name; registered address, both present and former if applicable; date of birth; reason for the provisional ballot; the precinct number and the precinct polling location at which the voter has voted; and a space for the county auditor to list the disposition of the provisional ballot. The provisional ballot outer envelope must also contain a declaration as required for absentee ballot outer envelopes under RCW 29A.40.091; a place for the voter to sign the oath; and a summary of the applicable penalty provisions of this chapter. The voter shall vote the provisional ballot in secrecy and, when done, place the provisional ballot in the security envelope, then place the security envelope into the outer envelope, and return it to the precinct election official. The election official shall ensure that the required information is completed on the outer envelope, have the voter sign it in the appropriate space, and place the envelope in a secure container. The official shall then give the voter written information advising the voter how to ascertain whether the vote was counted and, if applicable, the reason why the vote was not counted.”*

*RCW 29A.60.195 requires, “Before certification of the primary or election, the county auditor must examine and investigate all received provisional ballots to determine whether the ballot can be counted. The auditor shall provide the disposition of the provisional ballot and, if the ballot was not counted, the reason why it was not counted, on a free access system such as a toll-free telephone number, web site, mail, or other means. The auditor must notify the voter in accordance with RCW 29A.60.165 when the envelope is unsigned or when the signatures do not match.”*

**Recommendation:** The Pend Oreille County Elections Department must print provisional ballot envelopes that contain all of the required information. Procedures must be developed for issuing, receiving, and processing provisional ballots; and they must include a free access system for the voter to find out if the ballot was counted.

### **Published Notices**

The Notice of Election was published in a timely manner, but did not include the following: a statement that postage is required for returning the ballots, information on where to obtain a replacement ballot, and that no regular polling places will be open.

The Notice of Closing of Registration was also published in a timely manner. It stated that the voter registration files “will be closed against original registrations and transfers” for thirty days before the election. Information detailing the late registration period was included. The notice did not contain information on registration and voting aids for elderly and disabled persons, nor was there a separate notice published with this information.

*WAC 434-250-310(3) requires, “In addition to the information required in the notice of election published pursuant to RCW 29A.52.351 and 29A.52.311, a county auditor conducting an election by mail, including a county auditor that conducts every election by mail, must also state:*

- (a) The election will be conducted by mail and regular polling places will not be open;*
- (b) The precincts that are voting by mail if it is only specific precincts rather than the entire county;*
- (c) The location where voters may obtain replacement ballots;*
- (d) Return postage is required;”*

*RCW 29A.04.220 requires, “The county auditor shall provide public notice of the availability of registration and voting aids, assistance to elderly and disabled persons, and procedures for voting by absentee ballot calculated to reach elderly and disabled persons not later than public notice of the closing of registration for a primary or election.”*

**Recommendation:** The Notice of Election must be revised to include all required information.

Because of the late registration procedure for electors new to the state of Washington, the statement that the registration files will be “closed against original registrations” is no longer accurate. The Pend Oreille Elections Department must reword the Notice of Closing of Registration to reflect the actual procedure. Additionally, the notice must include information for elderly and disabled persons, unless a separate notice with this information will be published.

### **Questionnaire to Cities, Towns, and Districts**

The Pend Oreille Elections Department does not send a questionnaire to the jurisdictions to confirm salaries, incumbents, and offices up for election. Information on the offices up for election and open for filing is not disseminated to the public.

*WAC 434-215-005 requires, “Prior to March 1 of each year, the county auditor shall send a questionnaire to the administrative authority of each local jurisdiction for which the auditor is the candidate filing officer subject to the provisions of RCW 29A.04.321 and 29A.04.330. The purpose of the questionnaire shall be to confirm information which the auditor may disseminate to the public regarding the filing for elective offices. The questionnaire should request, as a minimum, confirmation of offices to be filled at the general election that year, the name of the incumbent, and the annual salary for the position at the time of the filing period. Responses should be received prior to April 1 of that year so that the filing information can be compiled and disseminated to the public at least two weeks prior to the candidate filing period.”*



**Recommendation:** The Pend Oreille elections staff must send the local jurisdictions a questionnaire every year and disseminate the returned information to the public as detailed above.

### **Voters Requiring Verification of Identification**

The Pend Oreille County Auditor's Office currently does not send notices to voters whose identification was not verified prior to the ballot being mailed.

*WAC 434-250-045(1) requires, "If the voter registration record of an absentee voter is flagged as requiring verification of identity, a notice must be sent at the time of the election explaining that a photocopy of identification must be provided in order for the ballot to be counted, and listing what forms of identification are acceptable."*

**Recommendation:** The Pend Oreille County Elections Department must create a notice as prescribed and develop procedures for handling voters needing verification of identity prior to voting.

### **Ballot Applications**

The Pend Oreille County Elections Department currently does not have health care facility ballot applications or special ballot applications.

*WAC 434-250-030(3) states, "As authorized by RCW 29A.40.050, requests for a special absentee ballot must be made in writing and each county auditor must provide the applications... (4) As authorized by RCW 29A.40.080, requests for an absentee ballot may be made by a resident of a health care facility, as defined by RCW 70.37.020(3). Each county shall provide an application form for such a registered voter to apply for a single absentee ballot by messenger on election day."*

**Recommendation:** The elections staff must create the appropriate applications, and develop procedures for issuing and processing both special and health care facility ballots.

### **Certification of the Election**

The Pend Oreille County Auditor's Office's policy is to mail election certification documents to the Secretary of State's Office immediately after certification. However for this election, it was momentarily overlooked and the documents were sent two days after the election was certified.

*RCW 29A.60.230(1) states, "...The cumulative report of the election and a copy of the certificate of the election must be transmitted to the secretary of state immediately, through electronic means and mailed with the abstract of votes no later than the next business day following the certification by the county canvassing board."*

**Recommendation:** The elections staff must send the documents to the Secretary of State's Office no later than one day after certification. The staff should create a reminder in order to ensure compliance with this in the future.

### **Disability Advisory Committee**

The Pend Oreille County Auditor's Office is in the process of creating a Disability Advisory Committee, but has been unsuccessful at finding people willing to participate on the committee.

*RCW 29A.46.260(2) requires, "Each county shall establish and maintain an advisory committee that includes persons with diverse disabilities and persons with expertise in providing accommodations for persons with disabilities. The committee shall assist election officials in developing a plan to identify and implement changes to improve the accessibility of elections for voters with disabilities. The plan shall include recommendations for the following:*

- (a) The number of polling places that will be maintained in order to ensure that people with disabilities have reasonable access to accessible voting devices, and a written explanation for how the determination was made;*
- (b) The locations of polling places, drop-off facilities, voting centers, and other election-related functions necessary to maximize accessibility to persons with disabilities;*
- (c) Outreach to voters with disabilities on the availability of disability accommodation, including in-person disability access voting;*
- (d) Transportation of voting devices to locations convenient for voters with disabilities in order to ensure reasonable access for voters with disabilities; and*
- (e) Implementation of the provisions of the Help America Vote Act related to persons with disabilities.*

*Counties must update the plan at least annually. The election review staff of the secretary of state shall review and evaluate the plan in conformance with the review procedure identified in RCW 29A.04.570.*

*(3) Counties may form a joint advisory committee to develop the plan identified in subsection (2) of this section if the total population of the joining counties does not exceed thirty thousand, and the counties are geographically adjacent."*

**Recommendation:** The elections department must create a Disability Advisory Committee that includes persons with disabilities or experts at accommodations for persons who are disabled. This committee must then develop a plan to improve the accessibility of Pend Oreille County's elections.

### **Precinct Boundaries**

Precinct boundaries in Pend Oreille County follow district lines instead of physical features, and some do not meet the requirement that the precinct be "compact". Kalispel – LeClerc, Usk, and Furport, in particular, contain stretches of land that jut out from the main precinct area, resulting in non-compact precincts. Additionally, there are some small islands in the Pend Oreille River that are not included in any precinct.

*RCW 29A.16.050 indicates, "(1) Every voting precinct must be wholly within a single congressional district, a single legislative district, a single district of a county legislative authority, and, if applicable, a single city. Every voting precinct shall be composed, as nearly as practicable, of contiguous and compact areas. (3) Except as provided in this subsection, changes to the boundaries of any precinct shall follow visible, physical features delineated on the most current maps provided by the United States census bureau..."*

**Recommendation:** Precinct lines must be redrawn to ensure that all precincts are compact and contiguous. Whenever precinct lines are changed, visible physical features such as streets, rivers, or ridge lines must be followed.

## Suggestions

The following are suggestions for increasing efficiency and improving operations within the County Auditor's Office. Although these suggestions do not address issues involving compliance with state laws or administrative rules, the reviewer identified the tasks as areas of election administration in which the County Auditor might improve the efficiency and operation of the office.

### Seal Logs

The Pend Oreille elections staff maintains a single handwritten seal log, listing the seal numbers for all locations at which seals are used. Because there are so many different areas listed on the same log, it is difficult to confirm that a seal being removed is the seal that was last put on in an authorized manner at that specific location. There is also inconsistency in the information kept on the log. Some of the entries do not specify if the seal number written down was being put on or removed. The broken seals are taped onto a slip of paper, with the initials of two employees.

**Suggestion:** The staff should use separate logs for each location that employs numbered seals. The log should state what location the seals are for (i.e. Ballot Box 1 Seal Log, or Tabulated Ballots Bag 1 Seal Log, etc.). This would make it readily apparent that the seals being removed were those expected, and that there was no unauthorized access. Additionally, the log should be preprinted to ensure consistency and thoroughness on the information that is being recorded. The employees' initials can be recorded on the log, and the separate slips of paper would not need to be used.

### Ballot Transportation

Ballots are picked up from the post office by a single county employee who is responsible for picking up all county mail. The ballots are delivered to the Auditor's Office by this same employee. Having only one person present with the ballots while they are not securely sealed does not provide sufficient accountability.

**Suggestion:** The ballots should be either securely sealed during transport or accompanied by at least two people at all times.

### Precincting Voters

After receiving federal grant funds from the Help America Vote Act of 2002, the Pend Oreille County Elections Department was able to hire a contract employee to assist with the street files to ensure proper precincting of voters. This is a tedious and arduous task, and there have been huge improvements made in the accuracy of the files.

During the 2007 General Election, 10 voters received ballots that did not accurately reflect the jurisdictions in which they should have been registered. It was determined this was due to errors in the voter registration files which placed them in the wrong precinct. Paper ballots were created with the correct jurisdictions for the voters and were mailed and processed accordingly.

**Suggestion:** There have been tremendous strides made in updating the street files, and the Pend Oreille County staff should continue to work on this project.

### **Secure Storage**

The vault in the Pend Oreille County Auditor's Office where election materials were previously stored contains records available for viewing by the public and is open to the public itself. It does not have a secure area for ballot storage. For this reason, the Auditor decided to use space in the County Commissioners' vault for storage of voted ballots and other sensitive election materials. Additionally, the materials held in this vault are in their own individually sealed containers. This is a much needed improvement in security.

On Election Night, staff needed to get items from the vault, and the Commissioners had all left for the day. The elections staff could not get into the vault because they did not have the combination to open it. The Auditor was able to contact one of the Commissioners' staff members and gain entrance to the vault.

**Suggestion:** The Pend Oreille County Auditor should have the combination to the vault if elections materials will continue to be stored there.

### **Ballot Processing and Reconciliation**

The Pend Oreille County Elections staff takes many unnecessary steps to process ballots, creating extra work for themselves. Additionally, a complete reconciliation is not done until the end of the certification period.

**Suggestion:** Many of the steps taken to process the ballots may be combined. Procedures should be revised to minimize the number of steps necessary, which will allow the staff more time to focus on accountability.

Additionally, reconciliation should be done on a daily basis to ensure that all ballots received are accounted for at every step of the process. This will make final reconciliation easier to complete, and any discrepancies would be noticed in time to address them.

After discussing this with staff, the Pend Oreille County Elections Department has been willing and eager to improve on the processing procedures. Along with specific procedural suggestions from the Secretary of State's Office, the elections staff has been working diligently to devise and follow thorough processing and reconciliation procedures.

### **Work Space**

The Pend Oreille County Auditor's Office does not have adequate space for ballot processing. Other than desk space, there was no room available for ballot processing. When conducting an all mail election, there must be sufficient space to ensure accuracy, room for observers to view ballot processing without interfering in the process, and the processing must be conducted in a controlled, secure area.

In addition to the lack of space, the location of the ballot processing area is a security concern. Ballot processing was conducted in an area between the public counter and the vault, which is

used to access public records. Anyone wishing to view the records would have to walk through the ballot processing area to the record storage area.

This situation was discussed with the Pend Oreille County Auditor and her staff, and various alternatives were considered. Because of budgetary constraints, it was agreed that the only viable option was for the elections department to use the upstairs meeting room for processing space. A letter was sent by the reviewer to the County Auditor indicating that this was the best, albeit temporary, solution. This letter was taken to the Commissioners and discussed at a public meeting. The Commissioners decided to allocate the room to the elections department for 2008.

The Commissioners and the County Auditor should be commended for working together to provide a temporary solution to the lack of space. It did require some sacrifice for the rest of the employees at the courthouse, as they had to give up a meeting room. The commitment to conducting accurate, secure, and transparent elections is much appreciated.

**Suggestion:** While there has been a temporary solution put in place, the Pend Oreille County Auditor and the County Commissioners should continue to investigate the issue of space and research more permanent options for the future.

### **Procedures Manual**

The Pend Oreille County Elections Department has borrowed a procedures manual from another county to use as a template. This is a smart way to begin work on a manual. Maintaining an up to date manual can assist in training new staff, ensure consistency, document compliance with law, and be a repository for elections knowledge should a staff member become unavailable at a crucial time.

**Suggestion:** The elections department should work on developing the manual and incorporating procedures specific to their systems and processes, especially the new ballot processing procedures.

In the manual, the staff should include procedures for situations that arise infrequently, such as the issuance of faxed or emailed ballots, missing or broken seals, and natural disasters or emergencies.

### **Certified Results and Certificates of Election**

The Pend Oreille Elections Department sends a certificate of election to the winning candidates, letters of explanation to all losing candidates, and a certification of the final results to all jurisdictions. This process takes days to complete, and is somewhat redundant as the results are available to the public on the county's website.

**Suggestion:** The elections department should send the certificate of election to each winning candidate, as is required, but should discontinue the practice of sending a letter to other candidates or paper copies of the results to each jurisdiction.

**Pens Used During Processing**

During ballot processing, it is often necessary for elections staff to fill out paperwork, such as tracking slips and seal logs. Blue or black pens are generally used, even near ballots.

**Suggestion:** The elections department should consider providing pens in a distinguishable color for use during ballot processing. This will ensure any marks made by the elections staff are easily recognizable.

## **County's Response to Draft Review Report**

The Election Certification and Training Program issued a Draft Review Report to the Pend Oreille County Canvassing Board. In accordance with WAC 434-260-145, we provided Pend Oreille County time to respond, in writing, to recommendations listed in the draft report.

The Pend Oreille County Canvassing Board provided the following response to the Draft Review Report. The signed original of their response is on file in the Office of the Secretary of State.





Marianne Nichols  
*Pend Oreille County*

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**Office of the Auditor**

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May 9, 2008

Office of the Secretary of State  
Attn: Samantha Duncan  
PO Box 40237  
Olympia, WA 98504

RE: Election Procedures Review

Dear Ms Duncan:

We would like to thank the Office of the Secretary of State and Samantha especially for their assistance in reviewing the election procedures in Pend Oreille County. As a new Auditor, I am thankful for the suggestions and recommendations made by your office to assist us in running the elections in the most efficient and accurate way possible. The following is our response to the items discussed in our review:

1. Ballot Boxes - We have ordered seals to be used on the exterior of the outside ballot boxes and will be using them in all future elections.
2. Unsigned Ballot Oaths and Mismatched Signatures – This letter has already been revised to comply with WAC 434-261-050(3).
3. Ballot Duplication – Overvotes will be tabulated as overvotes and no longer duplicated.
4. Provisional Ballots – We have developed our written procedures for issuing, receiving and processing provisional ballots. We have also ordered provisional ballot envelopes from our printer.
5. Published Notices – We are working on rewording this notice to meet all required elements.

6. Questionnaire to Cities, Towns, and Districts – We currently send a questionnaire to the Cities, Towns and Districts. We have not asked them to confirm salaries, but we will amend the letter to include all items required pursuant to WAC 434-215-005
7. Voters Requiring Verification of Identification – We are in the process of creating a notice and procedures for handling voters needing verification of identity prior to voting or counting of their ballots.
8. Ballot Applications – We have these two ballot applications now and are working on our policy to implement these procedures.
9. Certification of the Election – A reminder has been inserted into our elections schedule.
10. Disability Advisory Committee – I have found two people willing to serve on this committee. This is something I will be working hard on this year to develop and come up with a plan to improve the accessibility of our elections.
11. Precinct Boundaries – Our office drafted new precinct boundaries in order to come into compliance with RCW 29A.16.050. We held a public hearing recently for comment on the proposed changes. The parties strongly indicated that they want to see more precincts than the proposed changes would provide. County Commissioners unanimously voted against the precinct changes until the political parties were happy with the number of precincts.

We appreciate the support and assistance we have received from Samantha and the rest of the staff we work with at the Office of the Secretary of State. We also appreciate the time you took with us during this review process and all of your suggestions as we very much want to continue to improve on the accuracy and efficiency of the election process. If you have any questions on any of our answers, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

Thank you,



Marianne Nichols,  
Pend Oreille County Auditor



Ken Oliver,  
Chairman, Board of County  
Commissioners



Tom Metzger,  
Prosecuting Attorney

## Conclusion

The Pend Oreille County Auditor is doing a fantastic job of maintaining a high level of morale in the office. It was very apparent that the atmosphere of the office is positive and upbeat. Communication with the Secretary of State's Office and with other counties is encouraged in the Auditor's office, and all staff members are eager to learn and improve in any way they can. It was a pleasure visiting with the staff members, and they were open and cooperative during the review process.

All staff members had a positive attitude toward concerns discussed with them during the review, and they have been very proactive in addressing the issues. Many procedures were already in the process of being revised to reflect recommendations or suggestions before the review was finished. This promptness shows the dedication and enthusiasm of the Auditor and her staff.

The Pend Oreille County Auditor's Office has been actively pursuing voter outreach opportunities in the community. The Auditor has mailed letters to seniors and visited senior centers to promote voter registration and participation in elections. She has also visited local schools to talk about elections and voter registration. The Auditor should be commended for her commitment to educating the public about elections and encouraging participation.

It is clear that the Pend Oreille County Auditor and her staff are devoted to serving Pend Oreille County voters by administering accurate and transparent elections. Addressing the recommendations and suggestions listed in this report will assist them in accomplishing this goal.

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Review Report Prepared by:

Samantha Duncan  
Elections Program Specialist  
Office of the Secretary of State

Date: May 28, 2008

